Force and Habit

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Force and Habit

by orphan_account

Summary

> “You rely too much on your eyes,” Duncan said, fascinated by the repeated flex and clench of Will’s fingers, the near-convulsive swallows that made his Adam’s apple bob.
> Will’s fingers closed into fists, and they stayed curled. Defensive. “I have other weapons at my disposal.”
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> *Duncan ends up in DC for a high-profile political hit, and it’s all smooth sailing until a handsome stranger puts his hand on his bicep, leans up and whispers, “You'd better not.” Mission compromised and cover blown, Duncan follows the stranger back to his room to tie up loose ends.*
> *There’s tying up, but it doesn’t go as expected.*
> *(But for you, reader, it probably goes exactly as expected.)*

Notes

> What can I say?
> A three-shot: Will and Duncan. More Will and Duncan. And then Hannibal finds out.
>
> As usual, it should be readable... but, no beta. We die like Will's asshole by the end of this romp.

Compromise

Force and Habit

by stagethree

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Chapter 1

Compromise

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Most of his work took him abroad. So, while he'd visited D.C. before, necessity had him hunkering down in road-side motels across the Potomac from his target location, or with an old friend of his who always had space for him on the mattress beside her. This time, though…

A year out from retirement and Damocles had sent him an unusually sparse file. He liked his own recon better than anything they provided, but the absence of certain key details set his teeth on edge. He'd not officially accepted the work. Instead, he opted to source his own intel, and passed on the familiar comfort of Isadora's little house to book a room in the same five-star as his mark. A Congressman, no less.

The unsettled feeling got worse when he checked in: the fine hair on his arms stood on end, and all of his senses kicked into overdrive. In the heart of the city, the hotel was always busy. But when he checked in, the front desk clerk looked nervous and agitated, and apologized that his room wasn't quite ready yet. A number of simultaneous events, the clerk said, stiff enough to make him wonder.

"It *is* much busier than usual," he said. "A mix-up in the computer?"

A sigh. "I wish that's all it was," she said, finger slipping under her collar. "A friend of the GM's called in a favor and asked for twenty rooms, four nights. We don't have twenty rooms to spare, but we have to find them someplace."

That was all she was willing to say, and she seemed to regret having said it. Short notice for a party as big as that, and the GM had accepted.

Must be some party.

He headed over to the hotel café to wait for his delayed check-in. Coincidences, he found, didn't exist in his line of work. A detail like this--not something that Damocles could afford to overlook, and not something that should have caught him by surprise either. Maybe he'd gotten careless in his old age, in his readiness to retire. Even brutal, bloody assassination had become routine.

Or it could be the nightmares. Not enough rest. That could've dulled him.

Seated in the hotel café, in clear view of the reception desk, Duncan sipped his coffee and waited. Either for his room assignment, or for a sight of his mark. The moment Senator Edgecombe stepped through the door, he'd see.

An hour and a half and a second cup of coffee later, a large group of people came in. Suits and casual clothes mixed, but all clearly part of the same group. An award ceremony, apparently. One man, one of the few in a suit, approached the desk, and the clerk scurried off immediately on seeing him. A moment later, she returned with another suit in tow. The General Manager, all smiles and ready to glad-hand the visitor.

So this was the wrench in the works.

Duncan couldn't see the ringleader, so he studied the rest of the group. Noted holstered guns on some hips, but not all. And then, almost by accident, he looked up, and locked eyes with one of the men waiting. Curly hair, blue eyes. The other man looked away almost immediately, but then he turned to someone beside him, said a few words, and headed over Duncan's way.

Duncan tensed.

But the man, easily the scruffiest of the bunch, didn't turn his way. Not once. He walked straight to the counter behind Duncan and asked the barista for a top-up of his thermos of coffee.

"Do you have a room number?" The young man behind the register asked.

"I will in a minute," said the stranger. A pleasant voice, for all the brusqueness of his tone. "Not checked in yet."

He held out a credit card and the barista took the thermos from him. "Are you--" said the man behind the counter, holding the credit card in both hands. The bit of his face that Duncan could see was bright red. "Are you Will Graham?"

Duncan filed that name away, ears cocked for the conversation, eyes trained back on the front desk area. Still no Edgecombe.

When the stranger didn't answer, the barista pushed on. "You are, right? We studied your paper in my forensics class."

Forensics. Another word that caught Duncan's interest.

“What’s it like working for the FBI?” The barista asked. The stranger--whose silence confirmed he *must* be Will Graham--said more nothing. “I really do follow your work. You’re amazing. Is it true that you single-handedly caught--”

“Thanks for the coffee,” were the words that cut off the kid’s enthusiasm. He passed by, not looking back, and joined the group at the front desk. A minute or two later they all shuffled out, keys in their hands, and Duncan remained waiting in his seat by the café.

Will Graham. FBI.

Law enforcement presence while he was here on a hit could mean he’d been compromised.

Or it could mean nothing.

That look when their eyes met… it stuck with him.

He’d have to be careful.

And then Edgecombe showed, and Duncan’s focus shifted away from the intangibles to the man he meant to kill.

Will Graham. Special Agent, Profiler for the FBI’s Behavioural Analysis Unit.

Serial killers.

Nothing that Duncan’s work would be confused for. He didn’t have a signature, a calling card, though certainly some in his profession did. No, his specialty lay elsewhere.

Clean executions.

There were some other interesting articles about the profiler in a tabloid magazine called TattleCrime, but nothing that looked substantiated. Either way, it seemed like Will Graham was nobody for Duncan to worry about.

The look stuck with him, though.

He thought about it as he trimmed his beard, tidied his hair, dressed in black tie. He armed himself the way he usually did, and remembered that Will Graham had been one of the crowd without a gun.

No good reason for it, but the look stuck with him.

The crowd of party-goers to the Senator’s event was thick, and security was tight.

Not tight enough.

Duncan found his way in through the kitchen corridor, and wended his way into the throng in the ball room behind a group of servers carrying trays of champagne.

Some of the faces in the crowd were familiar. Political bigwigs, people you see behind podiums on TV. But nobody who would know *him*. Good. He spotted the bar across the room. A glass of whiskey, to hold if not to drink.

Half-way there, someone stepped into his path. Their bodies bumped; Duncan's hands came up, then his gaze. Will Graham's blue eyes met his, and then dropped away in the next second.

"Sorry," he said, eyes skittering over Duncan's body as though looking for a place to land, before he mumbled an *excuse me* and strode off. Duncan watched him go. The suit looked fine-- too fine, compared to the outfit he'd worn earlier. Not black but a deep charcoal with a very subtle plaid in black and a grey a shade lighter than the suit. Well fitted, with a crisp white button down and a hunter green tie. Elegant. Incongruous.

Duncan's jaw flexed and he resumed his path to the bar.

This felt less like coincidence.

Now, his attention was divided. Between searching for Edgecombe, and keeping tabs on Will Graham's location across the room. Their eyes didn't meet, and that in itself made Duncan tense. He adjusted his grip on the whiskey glass, circulating without making himself obvious.

He lost track of Will Graham when Edgecombe finally showed up. The guy's voice boomed, his slicked-back hair shone in the light, his perfectly manicured fingers reached out to shake hands and pat backs with everyone in his path as he made his way about the room.

"How long before Jack tries to schmooze him, do you think?" A man's voice. Duncan turned just enough to see who spoke. A taller man--dark hair, beard.

"He's on his way already." This, somewhat birdlike, chirping voice belonged to the shorter man beside him. "Twenty bucks says he's got Will in tow. Show off that prize--"

He stopped speaking, and the abruptness was explained when Will Graham's voice filled in the silence. "You owe me twenty bucks."

All at once, Duncan's senses honed in on the exchange behind him. He couldn't turn around to see what was happening, so he fixed his eyes on Edgecombe as every other part of him strained backwards.

"He took Doctor Lecter," Will Graham said. He sounded loose, comfortable, in a way he hadn't been during his clipped exchange at the café.

"That's a joke. Doesn't he hate Senator Edgecombe?"

"*Does* he hate people?" This, in a woman's voice.

Duncan gripped his glass of whiskey tighter, watching as two men approached the Senator. The GM's personal friend was one of them, and again Duncan could only see the back of his carefully styled head. The other man had the air of a government worker; loud voice, customer service smile, calculating gaze. Not unlike the Senator.

The woman went on. “I’ve never seen him feel strongly about anyone. Except for you, Will. He did say something about one of Edgecombe’s policies during the autopsy last week, though, didn’t he?”

Then, Will Graham’s voice. “Doctor Lecter finds the Senator *rude*. What little that matters--he’s planning to have him for dinner next week.”

A snort, from the tall one with the beard. “Not even remotely surprised. Anyone else need a refill?”

A murmur of agreement, and then the shuffling of footsteps away. Duncan chanced it. He turned his head, enough to land eyes on the group of people who’d been gossiping behind him. And there stood Will Graham, half-empty glass of bourbon in hand, blue eyes boring holes into Duncan’s face. He shook his head lightly, lips contorted between a smile and a grimace before he left to catch up with his friends.

Duncan sucked a breath in between his teeth.

Not a coincidence.

But that didn’t mean that his mission was compromised. Will Graham was a man with some degree of notoriety. He must be used to receiving attention from complete strangers. Maybe he’d mistaken Duncan’s watchfulness with the sort of admiration that the barista had shown him earlier in the day.

Not a conclusion that Duncan could afford to take for granted. He’d already gotten an eyeful of Edgecombe’s security detail, noted the style of their protection, the attentiveness of their agents. Lazy. Making his mark an easy one.

Maybe too easy. He’d stick around until the Senator started his speech, then cut out and find the Senator’s room.

He set his untouched glass of whiskey on a table and made his way to the back of the room. The lights were dimming, and Edgecombe wound his way through the crowd toward the dais at the other end. Duncan’s back touched against the wall. He breathed in deep.

“All right, all right, settle down everyone. I’ll just take a few minutes of your time so we can get back to the party! And that’s what we’re here for, isn’t it? To celebrate the accomplishments of the men and women who--”

Duncan took another slow breath, his attention zeroing in on the man as he spoke. The way he moved. Where his security detail stood, and what they were doing. Again, lazy.

That was enough. He straightened, and then stopped, when a hand closed around his bicep.

Will Graham.

He hadn’t heard him approach, and if that wasn’t a rare event.

In the low lights of the ballroom, Will's blue eyes gleamed. He leaned upward and his teeth flashed as he spoke. "You'd better not," he said, voice low. Private. His eyes flitted in the direction of the Senator, and then they returned to Duncan's face, they shone like mirrors and their corners crinkled with humor. "It's not your fault," he said. "I notice things."

His slim fingers squeezed Duncan's bicep once more before releasing him. And then, tread as quiet as it had been when he approached, Will Graham sauntered off through the crowd. Duncan waited until he stopped, next to the man in the plaid suit that he'd gathered was Dr. Lecter. Watched as they exchanged a few words. As Will glanced back in Duncan's direction.

Duncan breathed, slow and deep, and ducked out of the ballroom.

He walked slowly, unrushed, though his mind whirred a million miles a minute. Thinking through possibilities, implications. He needed to make a phone call. But he'd make one stop first.

"Mr. Jones," greeted the woman at the registration desk. "Is everything all right?"

He ran a hand through his hair and gave her a grin to cover his discomposure. "Yes. I was hoping you could do me a favor." He wanted Will Graham's room number. "A friend of mine is staying here tonight. I wanted to order him a treat, but I don't know his room number."

She blinked. "You could ask him."

"That would spoil the surprise." He grinned again, but she didn't look charmed, so he altered his strategy. "Can I place the order with you? You can have it sent to his room directly, and I won't have to spoil the surprise."

A pause as she thought it over. "Yes, I could do that," she said, giving him a grin, happy to play a part in a little subversive scheme. "What's the guest's name?"

"Will Graham," he said. "One of your last-minute party, but don't hold it against him."

She chuckled as she tapped a few keys on the computer. "And what can we send to his room?"

A bottle of champagne. That seemed to please her. Duncan thanked her.

Instead of returning to his room, though, he made his way to the hotel kitchens. The cart with the bottle of champagne rolled out into the service hallway. It had been a long time since he'd been forced to use this kind of old-school subterfuge, but hotel security had improved exponentially, and he didn't have the time to hack their system to find the information he needed. He stumbled into the service elevator behind the server, who, after a small protest that Duncan should use the visitor elevators, relented in the face of Duncan's stumbling, slurring guise of drunkenness.

He tripped out into the hallway of the eighth floor, leaning against the wall and mumbling under his breath. He clocked the room the server took the champagne to, and waited for him

to return to the service elevator before making his approach. A small device, about the size of a deck of cards, which could brute force the combination encoded in any hotel lock system. It took less than a minute for the indicator on the door to turn green, and for Duncan to duck into the hotel room.

He pulled his burner phone from his coat pocket, and put a fresh SIM card inside. The phone rang once.

“Speak.”

“Thought something was funny with the intel you gave me. Mission’s been compromised, Vivian, and you’d better hope I don’t find you’ve had anything to do with it.”

“What?” she said, and then, “No--no. Intel was sparse, but it should be an in-and-out job. What do you mean, compromised?”

She sounded earnest enough, but Duncan had known her too long to buy that as anything more than an act. “I’ll be in touch,” he said, and ended the call. The SIM card came out, to be crushed and disposed of in the bottom of Will’s trash can.

At last, he looked around the room.

Surprisingly orderly. A leather satchel sat next to a small weekend bag. Also leather, but newer, and of much higher quality than the satchel. The bottle of champagne sat chilling in its bucket of ice on top of the work desk in the corner. Duncan crossed the room, opened the satchel.

Scientific journals. A file on a serial killer--someone called the Muralist--replete with photographs and case notes, toxicology reports and interview transcripts. Pages and pages of notes on a yellow legal pad, but nothing that had to do with Duncan. He tucked everything back in its place, and then opened the weekend bag.

On top, a plaid shirt, not unlike the one Will Graham had worn when he arrived at the hotel. A pair of pants, white socks, light blue boxer briefs. These, at least, stood out from the rest of the clothing. Silky and fine, cut short, and a discrete brand name printed on the inside of the waistband. Incongruous. Will Graham seemed to house a lot of these kinds of secrets, puzzle pieces that didn’t fit. The way he’d avoided eye contact, for example, until he’d looked into Duncan’s eyes and apologized for noticing things.

And underneath the neatly folded change of clothing?

Well.

Duncan heard voices in the hallway. He stood, padded on socked feet over to the restroom, and ducked inside.

“--didn’t have to walk me back up to my room.” Will’s voice, he recognized.

He didn't recognize the one that answered him. "Of course I did."

"Needed a break from Edgecombe?" Will's deep chuckle sounded affectionate, amused. "Did you get his business card?"

"No need," said the other voice. Closer now, louder. European. Distinguished. "I've had one since he was a Congressional staffer."

Duncan heard the hotel lock's motor whirr and click. The door swung slightly on its hinges. Open just wide enough for Duncan to see the shadow of the two bodies outside.

"Here," said Will. "In case you need another break tonight."

A low chuckle. "Thank you, Will." A pause, and then a whisper. Too quiet for Duncan to hear.

"Nothing I can't take care of on my own," Will said, quiet too, so that Duncan had to strain to catch the words. All that exposure to gunfire and his hearing was starting to go. Something to bring up to his doctor at his next check-up, he supposed. "Later, then?"

Duncan didn't hear an answer. Instead, there were footsteps, moving away.

The hotel room door closed. Will's silhouette passed by the entrance to the bathroom, jacket draped over his shoulder, fingers busy rolling up his sleeves.

Duncan stepped out, gun raised, and pressed its muzzle against Will's back. "Stay still."

Will froze. Duncan watched his shoulders lower, the slight turn in his head. "Okay. Now what?"

He sounded relaxed. Not tense at all. Duncan skipped the muzzle of the gun up Will's spine, but the man's posture didn't change. Not even when Duncan put a hand on his shoulder and pushed him to turn around. "Don't be scared," Duncan said, taking in the smooth lines of Will's expression, utterly relaxed.

"I'm not," Will said, smiling. He didn't meet Duncan's eyes the way he had the last time they spoke. Instead, his eyes skipped over Duncan's features, then down his body. *Noticing things*. "You have a nice voice."

A comment intended to be disarming. Surprisingly effective, if Duncan was honest. But he didn't let it show. He gestured toward the edge of the mattress. "Sit."

Will took two steps back, and when his legs bumped against the bed, sat. His jacket, jostled off his shoulders, slid down his back and pooled around his hips on the bed. He looked at the black rope slung over Duncan's shoulder and silently held out his hands.

"Stay still," Duncan said.

"It's not polite to go through people's things," Will said, as Duncan tied his wrists together, the slim, silky black cord striking against the smooth pallor of his skin.

Duncan glanced up at his face. Will's lips were quirked upward, his eyes fixed on the knots that held his hands together. "Shoes," he said, setting the gun on the table by the window, a step further from the bed.

Will toed his shoes off, then pushed them to the side with one of his socked feet. "Can I take the tie off?" he asked. Duncan didn't answer, and Will, after a beat, reached up to undo his tie. He pulled at it slowly, carefully, and when it slipped out from his collar, rolled it into a neat ball and set it on the corner of the bed, out of easy reach. Then he reached up again, and undid the top button of his shirt. He sighed his relief, and his hands dropped into his lap.

In all of his years in this business, Duncan had never interrogated someone who affected such convincing nonchalance. Will seemed utterly unperturbed, waiting patiently for further instructions, as though there wasn't a stranger holding him at gunpoint and restraining him in his hotel room.

"Scoot up to the headboard," Duncan said. He held the other end of the rope in his hands, and kept some tension on the line as Will moved. When Duncan reached to wind the rope through the holes in the headboard, Will finally showed a crack in his demeanor.

He shifted his weight, hips moving to the side to give Duncan more room, and turned his face away.

But Duncan caught the color rising in his cheeks.

He'd known the purpose of the rope, of course. There was a bottle of lubricant in the bag too, and a pack of condoms. He hadn't expected that any of that context would carry over to their present circumstances, that Will would find this stimulating at all.

Will Graham waited until Duncan finished and climbed back off the bed. He tested the give on the rope, just slack enough that he could settle his hands in his lap. "You've got me all tied up," he said. "What are you going to do with me now?"

Duncan blinked. Will did too, and then his face turned a brilliant shade of red. His gaze dropped to the side, away from Duncan, dark lashes fanning out over his cheeks, the long muscles in his neck in relief. Really, a very pretty picture.

"I'm going to ask some questions," Duncan said, sitting on the mattress beside Will's legs, and dropping an experimental hand on Will's knee. "And you're going to answer them."

Will licked his lips, but he said nothing for a moment. "I could kick you," he said, and then shook his head minutely. A self-chastising gesture.

"You won't," said Duncan.

Will's gaze flicked up to him, then down to the hand on his knee. The joint moved slightly, bending under Duncan's palm. "I could do it."

"You won't," repeated Duncan, his grip turning firm. Will's lips parted, and he breathed in slowly. "You'll be good," Duncan tried, "and you'll stay still."

His captive said nothing, but the knee unbent, falling back to the mattress. Duncan had assumed that the rope was meant for Will Graham to tie someone else up with. But seeing how docile he'd become, how meek in his restraints, like a switch had been flipped… Duncan suspected that the rope was meant to tie Will Graham up, not the other way around.

"You're Will Graham," he said. Will didn't answer, so he squeezed his knee slightly, fingers digging in right where it would hurt.

"I am," Will said, and then, after licking his lips, added, "That's not a question."

Duncan squeezed again. Will flinched, dropped his gaze. "You work for the FBI." Will nodded. "Is the FBI being here tonight motivated by anything more than the awards ceremony?"

Those long, slender fingers tapped against the top of his thighs, and his wrists wiggled slightly, testing the knot. No attempt at concealment. "You're trying to ask if we knew you'd be here. We didn't. We don't know who you are."

He looked at Duncan again--eyes skipping over him, the way they did every so often, less awkward this time and more appraising.

"The FBI doesn't. Do *you* know?"

Will's chin lifted. "I don't know your name, or who you work for," he said, slowly. "But I know what you are, and what you came here to do."

"And you know this, how?"

The wrists wiggled again. The fingers stretched long and then went limp. "You know who I am, so you know what I do. You'd blend in well enough if nobody took the time to look at you."

Duncan chewed that over. "But you looked at me."

"Mmhm."

"Why?"

Will shrugged. "There's a lot in you to look at."

The words came out strained, reluctant. A confession he didn't want to make, but felt he had to? They made an impact. *It's not your fault*, he'd said. *I notice things.*

He released Will's knee, tripping his fingers down his shin, to one of his feet. "That's all there was to it, then?" he asked, grabbing hold of the polyester-blend dress sock and tugging it down so that it pooled around Will's ankle. "Chance," he said, pinching the fabric at the toe and pulling the hosiery off, "and curiosity?"

Will had sucked a breath in, and held it in his chest, lips pressed together into a tight and tense line as Duncan repeated his work on the other sock. But he offered no response.

Duncan flicked at the sole of one of his feet.

“That’s all there was,” Will said, and then clammed up again.

The tie, still sitting where Will had put it, out of the way, caught Duncan’s eye. He reached over and held it, admiring the perfect weave of the fabric. He held it up, and scooted forward, closer to Will, who leaned against the headboard.

“That--” Will started, and then stopped when Duncan held a finger to his lips. More discomposed now.

“Try not to be scared,” Duncan said, putting his hand over those beguiling blue eyes, feeling the lashes flutter and lower under his palm. The hunter green silk came next. Duncan tied it around the back of Will’s head, taking a moment to indulge himself, feeling the texture of the silk, and then of the dark curls that surrounded it.

Will said nothing. His pulse fluttered the way his lashes had, pumping visibly in the arteries in his neck, and the breaths he took were tiny, sipping things. Duncan stood, and Will made a small, tortured sound. His head turned in Duncan’s direction, licking his lips nervously.

“Try not to be scared,” he repeated, and took one of Will’s ankles in hand. Never mind his caution, Will jumped at the contact. His hands curled into fists in his lap. “You didn’t jump for the gun,” Duncan said, voice low, soothing.

Will licked his lips again. “You weren't going to shoot me,” he said. “And I could see you.” He tilted his head toward the window.

Ah. The reflection in the glass. Duncan hadn’t noticed it.

Slipping in my old age.

Duncan smoothed his hand up the inseam of Will’s trousers, feeling for shirt garters, or anywhere else Will Graham may have thought to hide a weapon. When he reached Will’s knee, Will’s legs slid a little further apart. Not much--only a few centimeter’s distance on either side. “You rely too much on your eyes,” Duncan said, fascinated by the repeated flex and clench of Will’s fingers, the near-convulsive swallows that made his Adam’s apple bob.

Will’s fingers closed into fists, and they stayed curled. Defensive. “I have other weapons at my disposal.”

Duncan followed the inseam higher. Much higher than strictly necessary-- until, when his knuckles brushed against Will’s groin and Will choked in a breath, he moved to the other leg, feeling his way back down toward the ankle. “Such as?”

“I’m pretty good,” Will said, his voice catching as Duncan squeezed above his knee again, “with my mouth.”

The words registered before the implication did. Duncan saw the moment Will realized the impact of his own words--the way his cheeks colored, the way his face turned slightly away,

the way his hands twitched in his lap. He couldn't help the charmed chuckle that escaped him in the face of Will's embarrassment.

"Are you, now?" He concluded his check. Will was clean. No weapons anywhere. And no answer forthcoming, either. Duncan tapped the tip of Will's nose, startling another jump out of him as he chided, "You're meant to answer."

His lower lip tucked between his teeth, Will gnawed it for a moment before he said, "Yeah. Usually."

"What's got you tongue-tied now?" He slid the pads of his fingers over the line of Will's jaw, with its neatly groomed stubble, down his SCM muscle to the notch between his clavicles, exposed by the open top button of his shirt.

Here, he could feel the rapid beat of Will's heart.

Again, he received no answer.

Duncan debated pulling his hand back. He tapped at Will's chest instead. "Answer, Will."

Will's mouth opened, but no words came out. Instead, his head dropped, and a broken, tortured noise tore from his throat. His arms straightened, palms flat as he pressed them into his lap.

Well. There was no pulling back now.

Force

Force and Habit

by stagethree

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Chapter 2

Force

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He'd had his fair share of liaisons. Something about his profession attracted a certain kind of woman to him. Specifically, the kind who embraced risk, who lived for it. And yet, this kind of play had never been a part of his affairs. Maybe for his past lovers, the danger of his work had been enough.

But then, Will Graham had very little in common with Duncan's paramours. He had little in common with the men Duncan interrogated in the past, too.

Even after such a short time, there was no question. Will Graham was a different kind of animal.

He couldn't quite put his finger on why. Yes, the way he'd read Duncan had a large part to play in the intrigue. The way he'd responded to the intrusion, to the gun, to being held hostage for interrogation… that played a part, too.

But there was something else.

Will had a lover, of course. It was Will's rope that kept him submissive on the bed, after all. Duncan had caught the subtext between him and the man who'd walked him to his door. The man, most likely, who was meant to tie Will up at some point later tonight. But despite having a lover, Will squirmed, hands in his lap in a pitiful attempt to hide his erection, at only a few touches from somebody else.

Why?

Maybe that's what it was. Will Graham made Duncan curious.

“Are you always so easy to rile?” Duncan asked. He slid his finger down Will’s sternum until the next button stopped his progress.

“I wouldn’t say *always*,” Will answered, voice creaking and defensive.

Forefinger and thumb eased the button free. The finger ventured lower and stopped yet again. He hummed.

The way Will’s jaw set, the way his frown tugged at his brows… he straightened a little against the headboard and sucked in a deep breath. Not just defensive now, but defiant. “The subject of your inquiry seems to have shifted.”

True. He undid the next button, pushed the fabric aside, and revealed more of Will’s chest. Will raised his hands to block the way. Duncan tutted and pushed them up over his head, so that his wrists rested on top of the headboard. Will didn’t protest, didn’t even try to move his legs to hide the tent in the front of his pants. Instead, he chattered on.

“And for someone who’s done interrogations before, you’re being awfully lenient. Accepting implications for answers, questions lacking focus.”

Also true. Maybe this was what Will had meant earlier, when he’d said he was good with his mouth. The recollection of that promise drew Duncan’s gaze upward to catch the tip of Will’s tongue sliding back inside, his lips wet with saliva. This…

This felt fun. A new kind of game.

“You have a lot of opinions,” he said, playing along, focus riveted on Will’s lips.

They parted first, and then after a pause, his voice came, along with the mocking rise of a single brow. “A *seasoned* interrogator would ask for specifics. I say I know what you do, you don’t take that at face value.”

Where did Will plan to take this? He undid the next button. “What do you believe I do?”

“I’m not going to tell you.”

Duncan scoffed.

“Right, I’m not a good actor, I get it.” He sighed, and his brows rose the way they would if he’d been rolling his eyes. “This would be where you menace me a little.”

Menace him. A little. What was Will’s plan here? Duncan looked at the tip of Will’s nose, then at his cheek. He let go of the buttons and tapped his fingers lightly on Will’s cheek. “Take that.”

“All right, all right!” Will squeaked, though he didn’t bother to turn his head to the side and feign an impact from the strike. “A killer for hire,” he went on, back to blasé. “You were given bad intel—that’s why you’re here, talking to *me* of all people—and you’re close to retirement, probably. You can have that little insight free of charge.”

Then, his lips twitched upward, a fleeting smile, which disappeared when he said, “Now ask me what I believe you came here to do.”

“All right,” Duncan chuckled. “What do you think I came here to do?”

“Are you going to tell me your name?”

Duncan’s fingers stuttered in their slow descent. That came out of left field. “Why should I tell you that?”

Will’s hips twitched. Just enough for Duncan to notice. “Don’t you want to hear me say it?”

That—

He undid the next button. The upper half of Will’s navel came into view. Duncan swallowed.

Will seemed to take his silence for rejection. “Fine. How about you leave me your business card?”

Impulse seized him. What could it hurt? “Duncan,” he said.

That eyebrow rose again. He wished he could see the eyes behind the necktie.

“No last name?”

He hummed, smiling. “It’s printed on my business card.”

“Leave it on the table,” Will said, smiling, humor lightening his voice. “You came here to kill Senator Edgecomb. Now—what’s the next logical question?”

“I asked you that already. How you knew.”

“Can you take off my blindfold?”

Another non-sequitur. “Why should I do that?” And he hadn’t called him by name yet.

“Easier to tell if someone is lying when they look you in the eye and answer.”

“Are you going to give me a different answer? Not chance and curiosity?”

Now both of Will’s eyebrows rose. Duncan had just been wondering about Will’s eyes—he thought again how interesting it would be to see them. The curiosity won out. He grunted, reached out, and undid the knot at the back of Will’s head. The tie came off, and he slung it over the edge of the headboard.

Will watched that movement, lips tugging down in displeasure. He’d left it folded tidily on the corner of the bed himself, and probably expected Duncan to do the same. He bent his knees, feet flat on the mattress. Then he turned his eyes on Duncan, and Duncan nearly lost his breath.

The lighting was different here, with the table lamp on and warming Will's face. His eyes shone a silver-grey, liquid and reflective, and they bored into Duncan the way they had in the ballroom not so long before. But though they dissected him, more and more invasive with every second, they also drew him closer.

Will lowered his lashes, then looked up, not quite meeting Duncan's eyes this time. "Okay. Ask again."

Like he'd been magicked somehow, the words came from him on command. "How do you know what you know about me?"

Those liquid grey eyes raised again, meeting him eye to eye. He held Duncan's gaze for a long breath. "Killers recognize killers," he said.

His hands came off the headboard then, loose of their restraints, and he slammed a fist into Duncan's cheekbone.

Not the hardest punch he'd ever received, but the most surprising. Duncan's head snapped to the side, and caught himself just in time for Will to land a swift kick to his gut. The next second, Will sprang off the bed.

A good enough attempt. Duncan may have gotten a little careless, this close to retirement, but he hadn't gotten soft. He caught hold of Will's shirt tail and wrenched him backward. Will made a strangled noise, losing momentum. But he worked that in his favor— a twist, and the buttons popped off, as the fabric tore out of Duncan's hold.

Still, it was enough time. A blow to the head or even to the diaphragm would be his usual course of action. Incapacitate first.

Instead, Duncan lunged, tackling Will to the rough red-and-blue paisley patterned hotel carpet. Will's hand, balled into a fist with something shiny catching the light, slammed into Duncan's thigh.

Pain shot up and down his leg.

A collar stay, sharpened to a brutal point, stuck out from the meat of his thigh, blood pooling around the wound. Painful, but not enough to incapacitate him.

Minor.

And entirely unexpected.

Before Will could wriggle out from under him, Duncan grabbed him by the wrist and hauled him upright, shoving him against the edge of the mattress. He yanked the other hand to join the first behind Will's back and gripped the wrists together hard enough that Will's bones creaked.

For a moment, they stood there. Will panted beneath him, trying to get some leverage, but could find none, pinned down as he was where Duncan pushed his wrists against his spine.

Duncan breathed in deep and pulled the collar stay from his leg. Blood welled out of it, seeping into the fabric of his trousers.

He grimaced, tossed the stay behind him, and it clattered against the far wall before falling to the carpet. Will's words to the man in the hallway bubbled to the surface of his memory. "Nothing you can't handle?"

Will laughed, breathless, turned his face so his cheek pressed into the mattress and he could peer up at Duncan from the corner of his eye. "I'm not out of options yet."

The cheekiness in his grin, the absolute unconcern in his expression, still the same as it had been when Duncan first held him at gunpoint. "You should have gone for the gun."

"That's still an option."

Was he trying to kill time? "When will your boyfriend come? The man in the hall?"

"Doctor Lecter?" Will's eyes widened, surprised. "He's my psychiatrist."

Not exactly a denial. "You gave him your room key. He buys your underwear."

"I did say it wasn't polite to go through people's things," Will chuckled. "You heard, so you know we didn't set a time."

Duncan chewed on that as he glanced at the clock on the nightstand. A little after midnight. If Will expected a rendezvous tonight, it couldn't be too long from now.

Plenty of time.

"Well, now what?" Will asked, still breathless, still grinning, cheeky, in Duncan's hold. "You're heavy."

Calm again, Duncan studied Will's face. The high color still in his cheeks, the way his hips canted away from the mattress, the way his breaths came, a little uncontrolled. He nudged Will forward, so that his hips pressed against the bed, and a low moan tumbled from his lips. "You're still hard."

"It's been an exciting evening," Will said. He gave another futile attempt to pull his hands free, to push Duncan off of him. All he accomplished was to grind a little against Duncan's thigh, currently between his legs. "You're *heavy*."

This time, the complaint came out a little more breathless. Duncan lowered more of his weight onto Will, experimentally, to a satisfying grunt from the man beneath him. "You don't mind," he said. And then, "I probably won't kill you."

Will chuckled. "That's quite a promise."

He wriggled again, and the fabric of his shirt slid lower down his shoulder, so that the tops of his shoulder blades came into view. More well-muscled than he looked in the suit. And it was a tantalizing view.

In fact—

Duncan leaned in, fixed on the slope of Will's neck, and brushed his nose against the skin. He smelled crisp, fresh. And warm— the skin that brushed against his lips felt warm.

Will shuddered in his hold.

"Did you just— *smell* me?"

Experimentally, Duncan pressed a kiss to the exposed shoulder blade, and then bit lightly into the flesh.

Will spasmed in his hold. Another breathless little laugh, and then, "Your beard tickles."

"How did you undo the rope?"

"I sail. I fish." He answered, peeping over his shoulder at Duncan. "I'm good with knots. The collar stay helped."

"Do I have to tie you up again, or will you be good this time?" Duncan pressed another kiss to the other shoulder blade, and then one on each vertebrae until he reached the nape of Will's neck.

He looked up. The humor had faded from Will's face. The flush remained, staining his cheeks pink. His eyes were bluer now. Clear, but lashes lowered slightly. Bedroom eyes. "Do you trust me to be good?"

"Not at all," Duncan said. He slid his knee forward, his thigh pressing tight against Will's backside, and was satisfied when Will's hips moved in an ineffectual attempt to gain some friction.

"Then why ask?"

Duncan grunted. He grabbed the long end of the rope, leaving the severed short end where it lay, and looped it around and between Will's wrists. Loose. Loose enough that, if Will wanted to, he could wriggle free of them. A gesture of a half-measure of trust. When Will tested his bonds, he huffed an amused sound through his nose, and his pink lips curled upward at the corners.

He didn't protest as Duncan dragged the neckline of his fine white shirt down, tangled that around his wrists too.

Will's skin was soft, smooth. His back muscles moved under the skin as he turned onto his side. "You've got me all tied up again," Will said. "What are you gonna do with me?"

Duncan hummed. He moved his leg out from between Will's, and lowered his hands to Will's chest. There was a stripe of red across his belly, where the fabric had chafed his skin as Duncan used it to stop him. He'd pulled hard enough that the mother-of-pearl buttons had flown across the room, after all. Now, he had full view of the navel that had tantalized him

earlier, the thin trail of dark hair that disappeared under the waistband of his jeans, the pink buds of his nipples.

“Handsome,” he said, smoothing his palm up Will’s sternum to rest on his clavicles, to wrap his fingers over the curve of Will’s neck.

“You seem the type more interested in beautiful.”

Duncan grunted. He stroked the fingers of his other hand down Will’s flank, over the prominence of each rib. “Beautiful, too.”

“If I had my hands free, I could help you out,” Will said, voice tremulous as Duncan tickled down his side again.

That didn’t deserve a response. Duncan finessed the fly of Will’s trousers open, slid the waistband down, and watched Will shimmy them down his legs until they pooled at his bare feet.

True, only a few of his many lovers had been men. But Duncan knew what to do, and Will had come prepared.

The boxer briefs that Will wore now were in much the same style as the extra pair in the bag, but the soft grey material verged on the sheer side, where his spare pair was a light blue. “You don’t look like you need much help,” Duncan said, slipping his fingertips under the edge of the fabric, hand snaking up Will’s thigh.

Will’s legs spread a little wider, and the fabric stretched tight over his erection. The fabric, sheer already, turned almost see-through over the head of his cock, damp with a drop of precome. “Maybe not. But if *you* don’t want one, *I* could use a hand,” he teased, feet behind Duncan’s calves and tugging slightly to bring him closer.

“A hand,” Duncan murmured. He squeezed lightly around Will’s throat once more, and then set to work stripping Will of his shorts.

Behaving for once, Will moved to accommodate him. He raised his hips off the mattress, then pulled his legs free. Except for the shirt, balled up behind his back, he lay there, bare and vulnerable before Duncan. The blush on his face spread down to his clavicles, and his eyes were hazy, riveted on Duncan’s face.

Before, when he’d tried to put a finger on Will’s appeal, he thought it had something to do with curiosity. Will made him curious. But now… for the last little bit, Will made him more than curious. He made him *want*.

And, incredibly, Will seemed to have no opposition to him just taking what he wanted.

“Up,” Duncan said, a little pressure to the back of Will’s thigh, moving him so that he lay in the middle of the bed. Will followed along, obedient as before.

“A hand,” he repeated. He reached for the bag on the side table and pulled the container of lube and the box of condoms from the bottom. “I can give you that.”

Will sucked in an anticipatory breath.

The lube felt cool on Duncan's fingers. He gave it time to warm in his hand before he reached out and took hold of Will's straining cock. The breath Will had been holding came out in a strangled squeak, and his head lolled back onto the mattress as his hips bucked lightly into Duncan's grip.

His dark brows drew down, and those dark lashes lowered, hiding those bright blue irises from sight. The part of Duncan that had regretted the blindfold earlier rose within him again. Will was at his most dangerous when his eyes were open; when they held Duncan in their sight and eviscerated him with their gaze.

"Open your eyes," he said, and Will, groaning, complied. Duncan smoothed his thumb over the head of his leaking cock, pumped his fist tighter, and Will, despite the rapturous flutter of his lashes, kept his eyes open, staring a hole through the ceiling.

Duncan pressed at Will's inner thighs, urging his legs wider, and pressed two slick fingers between the plump flesh of his cheeks until he found his objective. His aimless explorations from before, fueled by a desire to appreciate, suddenly had purpose. He wanted Will to shudder his release, fall apart in Duncan's hands.

He wanted Will to call his name.

Which he *still* had yet to say.

Will's stifled moans seemed like a distant memory. The moment that Duncan pressed his fingers inside of him, Will's voice tore from his throat, unrestrained. He really *had* come prepared. Duncan had expected to have to work him open, to take his time about it, but his fingers slid inside with only nominal resistance, and Will's hitching, breathy moans congratulated him almost instantly for finding the right spot.

Then again, the preparation wasn't made for *his* benefit. "You've got an unconventional psychiatrist," Duncan murmured, voice gruff to his own ears.

"This—" Will panted, moving his feet flat on the mattress and canting his hips to rock against Duncan's fingers, "this is an unconventional interrogation." And then, after a long groan as Duncan slowed the pace of his hand, stroking at Will's cock, "I attract unconventional."

And, well. That was true enough.

Will's look had stuck with him, hadn't it?

He'd kept Will in his sights with more dedication than he had Edgecombe. And sure there were reasons why—Edgecombe might escape him, but Will presented the danger of capture—but if he was honest… If he was honest, Will was right.

He'd been so focused until that moment, on Will and Will's body, and what sounds he made when Duncan moved his fingers just so, that he'd lost sight of his own reactions. Only now, when Will looked him in the eye again, did Duncan return to his own flesh and blood. Aware,

all at once, of the burning heat in his abdomen, the tension in his muscles, the way his own cock stood, begging for some attention for itself.

But Duncan knew how well self-control could serve him. He had no intention of giving in to the desires of *his* flesh.

At least, not yet.

His fist around Will's cock loosened. Will made his displeasure clear—the grunt, the baleful look—but he didn't complain as Duncan slid his hand, sloppy and wet, in that light hold over his cock, because Duncan's other hand picked up the slack. He scissors his fingers wide, coaxed a third to enter between them, before resuming his methodical pace, loosening him up from behind.

He wanted Will's body as soft and ready for him as it could be, before he indulged himself with the pleasure of feeling it.

A little pressure over the prostate every so often as he pressed his fingers in all the way to the knuckles, as he spread them wide, as wide as he could manage in the confines of Will's body, before pulling back out.

Will seemed to enjoy all of it. His head fell back against the mattress, the beautiful curve of his throat shown to best effect, and then he'd groan, wild and animal, when Duncan did something he enjoyed. His hips moved in concert with Duncan's hand, giving up pursuing pleasure in the loose fist around his cock, humping against Duncan's fingers, encouraging him to touch—

"There," Will gasped, arching his back again as Duncan rubbed, insistent, over his prostate. "Ah," he sucked in a breath, and then another long, low groan rumbled in his chest.

"Seems you can be good after all," Duncan murmured, pulling his fingers free and watching as Will's hole twitched and squeezed around nothing, delighting in the frustrated growl that Will made at the loss. He thrust his fingers back inside, and Will grew docile again. "Only need a little incentive."

The wet squelch of his well-lubricated digits sliding in and out of Will's squeezing flesh made a decadent backdrop to Will's panting breaths, his moans, his sighs. Duncan relished it all. He ached, throbbed with the desire to press his own body close, to fuck into that tight hole, to feel it convulse, to feel him come around his cock.

But he held back.

"Can you come like this, do you think?" he asked, voice rough to his own ears. He let go of Will's twitching shaft and dropped his hand on Will's inner thigh, pushing his legs higher, wider apart, thumb caressing over the adductor, straining under the skin.

"Yeah," Will said, voice breaking, strained. An unsurprising fact delivered with surprising honesty. "If—if you—can you talk more?"

Duncan's hand stuttered. It didn't go unnoticed.

"You—you have a nice voice."

Will had mentioned that before. At gunpoint.

Nobody had asked him to talk before.

"You like it?" he asked, fingers pumping into Will's sloppy, slick insides. "Or are you hoping I'll call you *good* again?"

Will's answer was a low moan, his head tossing to the other side, bright blue eyes fixed on him, body spasming tight as a vise around his fingers.

He grunted, stifling the urge to palm his own erection, aching, pressing against his zipper. "If you're good, you'll come around my fingers," he said. Will whimpered, just once—one sad, high, begging little sound—and Duncan put two and two together.

He wanted to be good. And he wanted Duncan to be mean.

Duncan had been rough before. Selfish, plenty. Mean… well. His profession required meanness, but not of this kind.

That didn't stop him from wanting to try.

"If you're good," Duncan said. "But you haven't been, have you?" He slowed the pace of his hand. No longer fucking them into Will, but pressing, probing, rubbing maliciously against the place where he was most sensitive. "You've lied. Tried to run away."

Will's eyelashes fluttered, but he said nothing.

Maybe something more direct. "And then you opened your legs for me like some slut," he said, battling embarrassment, "even though you're expecting your boyfriend tonight."

The thrill of Will's reaction quelled any discomfort he felt for spouting such filth. Will's pained groan, throaty and sweet. The heated color in his cheeks, the tightening of his body and twitching of his hips as his cock dribbled another stream of come. He would call Will a slut, humiliate him however much he wanted, if it made him look like this.

"That's why you want me to call you good," Duncan marveled. "You want me to lie to you because you know you're not." He swallowed, finally giving in to the urge to touch himself, his palm pressing against his cock for a moment for relief before undoing the button and zipper. "So you can pretend you wouldn't beg me to give you my cock."

Will hissed, eyes glassy with pleasure. He whimpered as Duncan rocked his fingers against his prostate. Another spurt of precome, another tormented moan.

Suddenly, the urge to hear him speak again, to hear him call Duncan's name, made blood rush through Duncan's ears.

“Do you want to come on my cock, or on my fingers?” He asked, urgent, stilling his hand to make Will writhe beneath him. Never mind that he’d asked Will to come on his fingers only a few minutes ago. He wanted Will to speak, wanted to hear his voice break with desire.

Wanted permission to fuck Will Graham into the mattress.

“You—” Will’s voice stuttered, then started again. “You’re too nice.”

Normally, that would sound like a compliment. But knowing that Will wanted to be bullied, Duncan found himself clenching his jaw at the words.

“You’ll come on my fingers,” he decided aloud. “And when you’re shaking and can’t take it anymore, I’ll make you come on my cock.”

Will’s head lolled to the side, and he peeked up at Duncan from under his lashes. He looked like the cat that got the cream, smug and satisfied, and out of his mind with pleasure.

“Slut,” said Duncan again, overwhelmed. He reapplied himself to Will’s prostate, fucking his fingers into him, still only loosely gripping his dick as he gave it lazy, absentminded attention. He wanted Will to come.

Now.

“Fuck,” groaned Will, back bowing off the mattress, “oh, my god—”

Duncan brutalized his prostate. Lube dripped out from around his fingers, and when he tired of tucking his pinky out of the way, coated it in slick and pressed it beside his other fingers, to another rapturous moan in Will’s musical voice.

“Oh—” Will said, hips grinding against Duncan’s fingers. “Please—”

“Please, what?” Duncan asked, drinking in the shaking of Will’s thighs, the lines of tension in his neck.

“Please, please,” Will gasped. “Please let me come.”

Duncan’s fingers stilled. “You’re forgetting something,” he said, chuckling as Will’s eyes fixed, angry on him, his body tensing as if to lunge. “I want to hear you say it.”

Will relaxed a little then, back onto the mattress. “Please, Duncan,” he said again, gaze still heated but not with anger anymore. “Please, Duncan, let me come.”

The magic words. His name sounded perfect in Will’s voice. The way Will pitched it, the way he sighed it, the way he overflowed with desire.

Duncan thought he might lose his mind. He tightened his grip on Will’s weeping cock, swiped his thumb over the head and pressed tight against his slit, as the fingers inside Will’s body spread and then plunged forward again to rub mercilessly at his sweet spot.

Will's eyelashes fluttered. His body arched, his voice creaked and groaned, he trembled all over.

And then, clenching hard around Duncan's fingers, he came, painting his chest with white. He moaned through it, and when his voice died, panted, almost delirious with pleasure.

Duncan pulled his fingers out, watched again as Will twitched and trembled and tried to close down on something that was no longer there.

Need coursed over him, and he reached down to take himself in hand.

"Tsk."

He stopped, hand halfway down. Something cold and incredibly sharp pressed against his neck.

"Allow me to stop you right there." The cultured, European voice from earlier. The psychiatrist, the friend of the General Manager. Dr. Lecter.

Will, still quivering from the aftershocks, blinked bleary and looked up. His gaze drifted from Duncan to the man behind him, and he offered a watery smile. "Hannibal." He didn't sound afraid or regretful. Only pleased, despite their compromising position.

"I'd ask what's going on here, Will, darling, but the answer is unfortunately, *glaringly* obvious."

Duncan cleared his throat, ready to speak in Will's defense, but Hannibal Lecter clicked his tongue and pressed the blade closer. It nicked the skin of Duncan's neck and a slow stream of blood welled from this wound, too.

"You were meant to handle things, Will, not *be* handled. Let alone enjoy it, like some faithless whore."

Will's cheeks colored prettily. He didn't look away, just licked his lips.

"And you," said the doctor, moving slightly so that Duncan could see his face.

A strikingly familiar face.

"It's not polite to play with others' toys without permission."

Duncan took in the anger glittering in those eyes, so much like his own had been ten years ago, and then took stock of the situation. The doctor had a scalpel in hand. He'd drawn blood already and nothing in his stance or demeanor said that he planned to stop with that tiny cut.

"I had permission," Duncan murmured, turning a little to face his assailant. "His."

The doctor huffed, his gaze pitying, knife pulling back slightly. "You've been remarkably rude," he said.

And then his arm raised, the knife slicing through the air.

“What’s to be done about that?”

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